Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 08099 261849Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /065 W
----------020799 271648Z /70
R 261804Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2228
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 08099

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: THE APOTHEOSIS OF JOSEP TARRADELLAS

REF: MADRID 7298

1. JOSEP TARRADELLAS RETURNED TO BARCELONA OCT. 24, RIDING IN AN OPEN CAR THROUGH STREETS LINED WITH HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CHEERING CATALANS, AFTER 38 YEARS IN EXILE. THE NEWLY-APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF THE CATALAN "GENERALITAT" (REGIONAL GOVERNMENT), WHICH HE HAD HEADED IN EXILE SINCE 1954, TOOK POSSESSION OF HIS OFFICE AT THE PALACE OF THE GENERALITAT. AFTER SWEARING LOYALTY TO KING JUAN CARLOS, TARRADELLAS ACCEPTED THE INSIGNIAS OF HIS OFFICE FROM THE
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PAGE 02 MADRID 08099 261849Z

HANDS OF PRIME MINISTER ADOLFO SUAREZ. ALSO PRESENT WERE INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA AND LABOR MINISTER JIMENEZ DE PARGA.

2. TARRADELLAS SPOKE SEVERAL TIMES TO THE CROWDS, HIS REMARKS CHARACTERIZED BY CLEAR-HEADED MODERATION. HE REFERRED TO THE NON-CATALANS RESIDENT IN CATALUNYA (OF

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

WHICH JIMENEZ DE PARGA IS A NOTABLE EXAMPLE), AND TO THE SOLIDARITY OF CATALUNYA WITH THE OTHER PEOPLES OF SPAIN. AFTERWARDS PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ SPOKE: "TODAY CATALUNYA INAUGURATES FOR SPAIN A PROMISING FUTURE OF CONCORD... WE DO NOT CONCEIVE OF AUTONOMY AS SOMETHING THAT IS GOING TO BREAK THE UNITY OF SPAIN OR THE SPANISH STATE...ON THE CONTRARY." BOTH TARRADELLAS AND SUAREZ REFERRED IN THEIR REMARKS TO THE "UNDERSTANDING" OF CATALAN AFFAIRS SHOWN BY THE KING (WHO HAD RECEIVED TARRADELLAS IN PRIVATE AUDIENCE IN MADRID ON OCTOBER 22), AND TO THE HOPE THAT CATALUNYA WOULD PROVE AN EXAMPLE FOR THE OTHER SPANISH REGIONS. AFTERWARDS ALL THOSE PRESENT SANG THE "ELS SEGADORS", THE CATALAN ANTHEM.

3. AMCONSUL BARCELONA OBSERVERS REMARKED ON THE REMARKABLE VIGOR AND CALMNESS DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT BY TARRADELLAS, WHO IS 78. HIS WIFE, ANTONIETA MACEA, WAS BRIEFLY OVERCOME BY TEARS, BUT TARRADELLAS SEEMED TO REGARD THE OCCASION AS HIS DUE: ONE OBSERVER COMPARED HIS MONUMENTAL SELF-CONFIDENCE (AND HIS HEIGHT) TO THE LATE GEN. DE GAULLE'S.

4. A FEW HOURS LATER, IN HIS FIRST OFFICIAL ACT, TARRADELLAS CALLED ON THE CAPTAIN GENERAL OF CATALUNYA, LT. GEN. FRANCISCO COLOMA GALLEGOS. ACCORDING TO AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT, SUCH A COURTESY CALL WAS SPECIFICALLY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MADRID 08099 261849Z

REQUESTED BY FIRST VP FOR DEFENSE LT. GEN. GUTIERREZ MELLADO, IN RESPONSE TO THE WISHES OF LT. GEN. COLOMA. AMCONSUL BARCELONA, WHO KNOWS LT. GEN. COLOMA WELL, REPORTS HIM (LIKE MOST SPANISH ARMY GENERALS) TO BE NONE TOO HAPPY WITH RECENT POLITICAL CHANGES (ESPECIALLY INVOLVING SO-CALLED REGIONAL AUTONOMY). TARRADELLAS HAS SHOWN HIMSELF MORE THAN WILLING TO YIELD ON SUCH GESTURES. THE FOLLOWING DAY, OCT. 25, GEN COLOMA RETURNED THE COURTESY VISIT. AFTER AN HOUR'S PRIVATE CONVERSATION, TARRADELLAS EMERGED SMILING.

5 COMMENT: THE GENERALITAT THAT TARRADELLAS HEADS IS, OF COURSE, A "DE-CAFFEINATED" AND PROVISIONAL BODY WITH VERY LIMITED POWERS (REFTEL). ITS ESTABLISHMENT IS NONE-THELESS A SIGNIFICANT FIRST STEP TOWARDS GRASPING THE NETTLE OF REGIONALISM. NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDER WAY FOR A SIMILAR "PROVISIONAL" STRUCTURE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY, AND PROGRESS REPORTEDLY IS BEING MADE. EATON

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